

HUNTINGDON

PEOPLE

PLACES

PURPOSE

# CONTENTS

We value your continued

**SUPPORT**

and pledge to invest

*c.£1 million*

into Huntingdon over 5 years

1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2

WHAT IS HUNTINGDON FIRST?

3

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

4

WHY VOTE FOR HUNTINGDON FIRST?

5

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO LOSE?

6

HUNTINGDON DEVELOPMENTS

7

OUR VISION FOR HUNTINGDON  
ENHANCE | PROMOTE |  
SUPPORT | SUSTAIN

8

FINANCE

9

BUDGET

10

GOVERNANCE

11

VOTING PROCEDURE

12

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## Section 1



**PAUL SWEENEY**  
Huntingdon  
First Manager

From its inception as a Business Improvement District, Huntingdon First has sought to embrace its members and the wider business community behind a shared vision for Huntingdon Town Centre. In 2017 our members resoundingly showed their support for the renewal of the BID's mandate with **85.7%** voting in favour of the BID maintaining its role as a business collective in Huntingdon.

Over the last ten years Huntingdon First has strengthened the town's proposition increasing footfall and lowering the vacancy rate of available units. Our vacancy rate currently sits at 10.08% vs the National UK mark of 11.2% and with more new businesses scheduled to open by the end of 2022 I'm proud that the ongoing developments still position Huntingdon as an attractive destination for new business. Again our Independent business rate of 57.7% far exceeds the national bench mark of 40.0%. Huntingdon First has provided a formal mechanism to provide enhanced leverage, investment and operational and promotional activity to the overall management of Huntingdon Town Centre – benefitting its member businesses and the wider community.

The last two years have been particularly tough on business. Huntingdon First has played an important role during the pandemic, supporting businesses with grant applications for funding throughout the lockdown period. And more recently working collaboratively with HDC on the safe re-opening of the high streets, the safe shopping messaging, the Eat Out to Help Out scheme and using the 'Welcome Back' grant fund, to entice shoppers and visitors back into our town.

Having recently taken on the role of Town Manager, I believe Huntingdon First should be an overarching umbrella over the town, a voice for its business, a purveyor of events and an ambassador for our fabulous town, and in doing so making Huntingdon a great place to visit and enjoy. Working strongly with our Night Time Economy to ensure that the town thrives day and night, making our visitors feel safe and welcomed within the town no matter what time they visit is a priority, we work very closely with HBAC (Huntingdonshire Businesses against Crime) to report and monitor developments in town related to crime and anti-social behaviour.

My focus moving forward will be to help ensure Huntingdon continues its upward trend and become a real visitor destination. I want to ensure its proposition as a town centre - with its retail, commercial, leisure and night-time components - as one of the best in the region; to not only attract more visitors into the town but to ensure that they stay for longer.

Our well respected Town Rangers are of course already fully ingrained into our high street and their ambassadorial presence will be an important part of our plans over the next 5 years, as will sustainability and encouraging a 'more responsible' business community.

I strongly believe that for a town to thrive, all of its facets need to work together. It will be our job to ensure strong collaborations between our business partners, Huntingdon Town Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, local community groups and the wealth of local charities in Huntingdon which will result in a more vibrant and commercially successful Huntingdon. Working with authorities as a key partner on long term strategies such as the 'Shared Place Strategy'. It is hoped that this more collaborative working will lead the way to attracting more funding to enhance our town.

We're so confident in our plans for the future that we have already started work! Our Discover Huntingdon branding is now starting to take shape as the recognisable identity for our town filtering into the town already, improved information is underway and a focus placed upon our rich heritage led by the recently completed 'Mural Museums'. This will all lead towards our ambitious project of opening Huntingdon's very first Visitor Centre, right at the heart of the High Street.

I feel that our ever evolving town offers so much in the way of potential and as such the opportunity for BID Huntingdon to invest £1 million over the next five years is key to the town's future.

But of course this will only be possible with your ongoing support and commitment .....

**Vote 'yes' for the BID Huntingdon.**



# SNAP SHOT OF THE LAST *5 years*

**6.1%**

Increase in footfall  
comparing a rolling  
12 month period

June 2021 to May 2022  
with June 2016 to May 2017

Point of contact during

**COVID**

lockdowns, support with  
applying for funding, monitoring  
shop and business units during  
closure, distribution of update  
to restrictions and guidance  
for business direct from the  
Government

**BUSINESS**  
*support*

**FREE** and discounted training  
and business seminars, such  
as First Aid at Work and the  
newly introduced Personal  
Licence Training.

**LOBBIED**  
*local*  
**AUTHORITIES**

on behalf of the businesses  
for town enhancement and  
development



*Continual*  
**SUPPLY**

of footfall data analysis for  
the town centre, a strong  
KPI tool for the town.



**REGULAR**

Town Centre events to  
promote and increase footfall,  
Summer Fun Days, Visiting  
Markets, Town Trails and  
Competitions

**DISTRIBUTION**

of local business marketing  
materials to visitors  
and shoppers



**FREE**

membership to  
Huntingdonshire  
Business against Crime  
(HBAC) scheme



**DINO DAY**  
*Event*

Highest ever recorded footfall  
in Huntingdon with

**71.6%**

increase on average  
for the day.

**CONTINUED**  
*to supply*

up to date town  
maps and guides



*Continual*  
**ENGAGEMENT**

on social media, using its  
tools to promote and enhance  
our town as a destination



**UTILISING**  
*promotional*  
*space*

to increase town funding and  
promote local businesses  
in a high traffic area



**29.0%**  
**FOOTFALL RECOVERY**

pre-Covid (2019) much  
higher than the Eastern  
average of -3.3% and  
the UK of -2.2%



**NEW**

Defibrillator installed  
and maintained



*Local*  
**& REGIONAL**

press advertising through  
newspapers, radio and  
Facebook ads





# next

## WHAT IS HUNTINGDON FIRST?

### Section 2

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are not-for-profit partnerships, in which the local businesses have voted to collectively invest to improve the environment of their local area. A BID is brought in through a democratic ballot process and the services provided are additional to those delivered by the statutory authorities. There are currently over 300 BIDs in the UK supporting and investing in town centres

A BID seeks to provide greater strategic context for business to galvanise the business community, statutory authorities and wider stakeholders behind a common vision for the district and generate an enhanced income stream, benefitting the whole area in terms of service provision. A BID provides the business community with a united voice and the ability to influence and shape the future. It acts as a catalyst to promote wider public and private investment into projects, which enhance the neighbourhood.

COSTA



#### Why do businesses support BIDs?

- Tangible return on investment
- Provision of additional services
- A focus on increasing footfall and dwell time
- An enhanced street environment
- Effective engagement through a single, unified voice for the business community



A successful BID has to have 'buy-in' from the majority of those businesses who will finance it – both for a successful vote and also to ensure the partnership evolves in a positive environment.

BIDs are subject to Government legislation, statutorily established once voted for by the majority of businesses in an area and have a maximum term of five years before returning to their electorate for renewal. Once a majority vote has been achieved, a BID levy becomes mandatory on all defined ratepayers.

For a BID to be introduced, the ballot of business must meet two conditions: a majority in number of those voting and a majority in proportion of rateable value of those voting. The BID levy is then applicable to all eligible businesses.

The Council Returning Officer and their electoral services staff administer the BID ballot. It is arranged in line with rules set out in the BID Regulations (2004) as approved by Parliament.



# BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

## *Section 3*

All Saints Passage  
Ambury Road  
Bradbury Place  
Brampton Road  
Brewery Yard  
Brookside  
Castle Moat Road  
Chequers Court  
Chequers Way  
Cromwell Mews  
Cromwell Walk  
Drydens Walk  
Edison Bell Way  
Ermine Street (part)  
Euston Street  
Ferrars Court  
Ferrars Road  
George Street  
Grammar School Walk  
Great Northern Street  
Handscroft Lane  
High Street  
Ingram Street  
Malthouse Close

Manchester Place  
Market Hill  
Mill Common  
Montague Road  
Newton's Court  
Nursery Road  
Orchard Lane  
Ouse Walk  
Princes Street  
Roscrea Terrace  
Royal Oak Passage  
Riverside Road  
St Benedict's Court  
St Clements Passage  
St Germain Walk  
St Johns Street  
St Marys Street  
Temple Close  
The Walks East  
Trinity Place  
Victoria Square  
Walden Road  
Wood Street





# WHY VOTE FOR HUNTINGDON FIRST?

*Section 4*

## WHY RENEW HUNTINGDON FIRST?

- 1** Support the Town's economic recovery
- 2** £1m collective investment into Huntingdon Town Centre
- 3** Encourage footfall and increase dwell time
- 4** Encourage greater visitor spend
- 5** A safer and cleaner street environment
- 6** Be a collective voice for businesses on issues that matter

Huntingdon First is the voice of Huntingdon High Street, championing the needs of our businesses with local & national councils and government. Huntingdon First run event and marketing strategies that support our business community as a whole; running a programme of business training and networking opportunities to strengthen the Huntingdon business community. We also manage an attractive town centre where people are proud to work, shop, dine, visit and do business. Huntingdon First works on safety and security initiatives to improve and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in the town.

## TOGETHER YOUR LEVY CONTRIBUTES TO A LOCAL COLLECTIVE C.£1 MILLION OVER 5 YEARS



- Less than 37 pence a day for a small Huntingdon business with a rateable value of £9,000
- Just £2.22 a day for a medium business with a rateable value of £54,000
- Only £5.96 a day for a large business with a rateable value of £145,000

"For a minimum of 37p per day I get Town Rangers on patrol, on hand to support my business from crime and ASB"



# WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO LOSE?

## Section 5

That's a very good question! What have you got to lose if we don't have a BID?

*It should be noted*

That Huntingdon First services are not provided by the Council. Without Huntingdon First all current services provided by the BID would cease.

What a

NO

vote for Huntingdon First will mean for Huntingdon:

- 1 Loss of £1 Million Investment in Huntingdon Town Centre.
- 2 The BID team will be disbanded
- 3 NO Funded Membership to Business Crime Reduction Partnership.
- 4 NO Authoritative Voice to Lobby the Council for Change.
- 5 NO Collaborative Seasonal Town Events.
- 6 NO Town Centre marketing or additional promotion for your Business.
- 7 NO Business Advice When you need it.

1

### £1 Million Investment in the Town

Huntingdon First invests almost £1 Million into our Town Centre over the five year term, funding events, enhancements, promotions and advertising. And not least the Huntingdon First team. This investment is direct money from our business community for our town.

2

### The Huntingdon First Team

The Town Rangers are fully funded via Huntingdon First, without us you will lose our town ambassadors, the eyes and ears on the streets. Your Huntingdon First Management Team actively engages with the town on a daily basis, striving to improve and enhance people's experience, encouraging footfall. They are the only day to day town centre management in Huntingdon. This role would not be replaced via any council should Huntingdon First dissolve. Like the Town Rangers the new installed Night Rangers are part funded by Huntingdon First to support our night economy. Playing host/ ambassador roles at key weekends throughout the year welcoming our community into the town centre for their evenings out.

3

### Huntingdon Business Crime Reduction Partnership

HBAC & DISC are huge parts of our support for businesses to tackle ongoing crime and anti-social behaviour. The Huntingdon First levy payers are offered access to DISC and the HBAC group, including Pub Watch and the bi-monthly Crime & Community Forum.

4

### Authoritative Voice for Change

Huntingdon First continues to act as liaison between the town centre, Town, District and County Council. Navigating the various groups invested in the town to ensure a vibrant town centre. Huntingdon First is YOUR voice, don't lose it!

5

### Collaborative Seasonal Town Events

Huntingdon First arguably provides the largest town events, promoting the town and increasing footfall. Over the last five years we've put on Family Fun Days, Christmas Markets, Emergency Service Days and The Covent Garden Entertainers. Alongside the continental markets, food and drink festivals and the latest events for 2022 with the HUGE Food Fayre with Entertainment and Dino Day which saw the highest recorded footfall in Huntingdon, an increase of 71.6% of an average Saturday! These events are entirely funded through Huntingdon First and would cease should we not pass renewal. The aim of these events is to encourage the shop local culture within our community and promote the town to visitors.

6

### Town Centre Marketing and Business Promotion

Huntingdon First currently invests c. £375,000 over five years directly into enhancing our town through decorations such as bunting and Christmas Lights, free promotional events and our very direct and bespoke advertising. All of which will be lost. 'Huntingdon First' website currently has incredibly high traffic through it, with over 5,000 unique visitors per month with many visitors and locals using the business directory as a first stop for searching services in the local area. The website is used as a central directory for the town and our community, promoting events, businesses, vacancies and in conjunction with the visitors centre promoting tourism. Owned and operated by Huntingdon First, all this would be lost without us. Our average reach on Facebook is 5,000 - 6,000. Our Dino Day advertising peaked at 47,300 in June 2022.

7

### Business Advice and Support

Huntingdon First provide ongoing support to businesses, highlighting available grants, funding and options for reducing environmental issues through combined authorities. Never more so than through the recent pandemic. We provide weekly, monthly and yearly footfall data to our businesses, a key KPI for many to measure footfall levels within the town and can be compared on a local or national level. The data subscription costs Huntingdon First almost £3,000 per year, this will be lost. In addition to this Huntingdon First offers over six free or subsidised, accredited training courses per year, including First Aid at Work, Personal Licences training, and Manual Handling, no one else in town offers this level of low cost or free training.

**"High Streets are a crucial part of our local economies and people care about them because they are also the centres of their community. We work closely with Huntingdon First to promote the town centre and support local businesses to ensure there is thriving town centre experience for people to enjoy."**

**Huntingdonshire District Council**





# HUNTINGDON DEVELOPMENTS

## Section 6

### We Listen

We at Huntingdon First are fully aware of the continual frustrations within the town, we will strive to continue to address these areas on your behalf as part of our ‘enhance, promote, support and sustain strategy’.

“Huntingdon BID is a shining example of what happens when innovation meets passion. HBAC is very proudly working in partnership to ensure Huntingdon remains a safe and diverse environment for visitors and retailers. Working together to share evidence based intelligence in the fight against crime and anti-social behaviour in both the daytime and night time economy. BID Rangers are invaluable asset to the town, providing extra eyes and ears within the retail environment to help alert incidents and situations of concern to the relevant partners”

HBAC Manager



### Collaboration

Collaborative working is key within a town of our size. We will continue to work alongside our partners at Huntingdon District Council, Huntingdon Town Council, Cambridge County Council, CCTV, HBAC and our support and community groups to ensure a more cohesive approach and vision for the town. Including working closely with private landlords and the Economic Development team at Huntingdonshire District Council to reduce vacancy rates by attracting new business to the town through a collaborative retail strategy. Utilising these partnerships and data analysis such as footfall reports with the aim of bringing further independent businesses that add value to the town.

### St Benedict's Court

A privately owned area of our town is a tricky proposition however we will strive to do all we can with the businesses within to promote and enhance them. Working with the councils to support as much work as we can to lift the appearance of the area on the approach from the bus station.



### The Market Square

Our aim is to capitalise on our amazing market square to ensure it is used to facilitate not just one off events but to promote as an outdoor communal area on warmer days. Striving to enhance our market offering in conjunction with Hunts District Council and private markets. We estimate somewhere over 6,000 office workers within the town who we would like to see use the town for recreational breaks from work, encouraging the theme of ‘Love Work in Huntingdon’ as a project. We will also continue to work and advise developers for the vacant 111 High Street units to once again have a flag ship venue on the square.

### Parking

We will continue to look at ways to improve and promote Huntingdon as a destination, we believe that giving people reasons to stay for longer in town will support our long term parking goal. Working alongside Huntingdonshire District Council to promote flexible parking offer, and work to ensure the Decriminalisation of Parking Project is implemented effectively to support the attractiveness of our town whilst supporting the needs of the businesses.



# OUR VISION FOR HUNTINGDON

## Section 7

The heart of a town should have a purpose for everyone, it should be welcoming and encourage variety in people. It should be vibrant, offering new, innovative ideas to enhance and sustain businesses and communities for the future. We at Huntingdon First believe that our four key strategies for the next five years will support this.

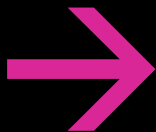
### Measurement

- We will monitor and give feedback on our performance through:
- Footfall figures.
  - Vacancy Levels.
  - Car Park Usage.
  - New Business Activity.
  - Website/Social interactions.
  - Business Feedback.
  - Consumer Feedback.
  - Town and Night Ranger logs.
  - Media Coverage.
  - Annual Surveys.



## ENHANCE

Creating & Maintaining Quality Spaces



## PROMOTE

Creating & Promoting a Vibrant Place



## SUPPORT

Connecting & Representing Businesses



## SUSTAIN

Improving Sustainability & the Environment



# CREATING & MAINTAINING QUALITY SPACES

A successful Huntingdon First would ensure that the ever changing landscape of Huntingdon would be well managed, with outdoor spaces for all to enjoy. Projects would be delivered to make the area more attractive and the BID would seek additional funding to realise lasting, ambitious improvements

## HUNTINGDON FIRST WILL...

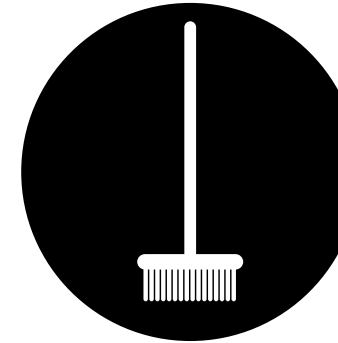
**1** Provide Town Rangers and the Town Management Team

**2** Partner with HBAC, CCTV and the Police

**3** Provide Night Rangers to support the Night Time Economy

**4** Leverage the town's heritage to attract tourism

**5** Deliver a bright and vibrant appearance



### Town Rangers and the Huntingdon First Management Team

Over the next five years Huntingdon First will continue to provide the team of Town Rangers. The Rangers play a key role in the continual enhancement of our High Street. Ensuring the visitors experience is excellent and reporting any environmental and safety related issues to the appropriate statutory agency.

### HBAC

Continuing and strengthening our work with Huntingdonshire Business against Crime (HBAC) to continue to make Huntingdon a safe environment to visit. Working together with HBAC, CCTV and the Police and with our business community with the continued use of the radio scheme. Keeping our businesses connected and informed of new intelligence, trends and ongoing issues.

### Night Rangers

We will add Night Rangers to support our evening and night economy within the town. Starting with a focus on pay day weekends. Night Rangers will act as Evening Hosts giving safe direction of travel to and from car parks, supporting HBAC with anti-social behaviour and night economy issues.

### Night Time Economy

Enhancing our Night Economy is a key focus in driving visits within the town with the growth of housing in the neighbourhood. Building relationships and training with our evening economy in conjunction with HBAC through regular Pub Watch meetings, training promotion. Our aim is to make Huntingdon High Street a more welcoming and safer proposition both day and evening.

### Tourism and Heritage

A large part of our new term will focus on enhancing and promoting Huntingdon's rich and exciting heritage. Leveraging our town's legacy into visitor engagement through mural museums, a visitor's centre and promoting the town centre as a historic destination.

### A Town to be Proud of

Our recently completed 'Mural Museum' pieces and enhancement of poorly represented alleys and entrance ways will be a key focus over the next five years. Ensuring that the town gains a new bright, well-lit and vibrant appearance. Working collaboratively with accessibility charities and schemes to ensure that our town is as accessible as possible for all.

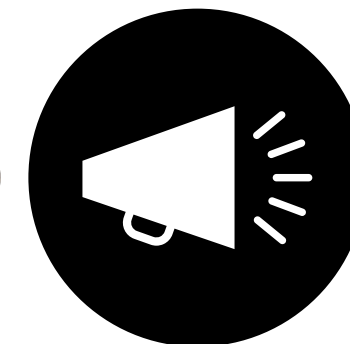


# CREATING & PROMOTING VIBRANT SPACES

A successful Huntingdon First would put Huntingdon on the map! Using our rich heritage to create a clear identity which would be strongly promoted. Providing engaging events to animate our streets, giving the area a sense of place, where staff and the whole community would be proud to work and spend time.

## HUNTINGDON FIRST WILL...

- 1** Leverage 'Discover Huntingdon' branding to increase footfall
- 2** Work collaboratively to open a visitors' centre on the High Street.
- 3** Promote Huntingdon not only as a Tourist Destination but also a desirable place to live
- 4** Grow and engage visitors through strong marketing and promotions
- 5** Maintain and utilise new information boards



### Discover Huntingdon

Promotion is key to the footfall of the town, and Huntingdon First are keen to continue the great work that has already taken place within the town. Using the 'Discover Huntingdon' branding we aim to promote the High Street like never before! Our record breaking Dino Day in July 2022 showcased exactly what our town is capable of. We intend to build on this success by enlivening the town with fantastic events and ongoing sustained approaches to footfall, prolonging the firework effect of events to sustain footfall and dwell time for longer.



### Visitors Centre

Our Discover Huntingdon Visitors Centre aims to become the central focus of the High Street, giving the town a beating heart from which we can house our promotions. A place where locals and visitors alike can source visitor information on local attractions, walks and events alongside historic and heritage literature, town maps, guides and promotional material: a central hub that celebrates and promotes all things Huntingdon.

### Tourism

Our rich heritage is ripe for promotion, using key frames from our town's legacy to attract visitors for day trips and weekend getaways. Working with our partners in hospitality to ensure we welcome new guests to the community. Using these tools we will also work with Estate Agents and Landlords to promote the town as a viable place to live.

### Marketing and Promotions

Working alongside key media partners such as The Hunts Post, Star Radio and leveraging our growing social media presence to promote key messaging about the town, events and specific business promotions. Using this tool to support businesses with recruitment, engagement and promotional initiatives.

### Information Boards

Our newly adopted Visitor Information boards in key car park locations will keep our local community informed of town events, business initiatives, vacancies, promotions and be updated with town maps and heritage guides.

# CONNECTING & REPRESENTING BUSINESSES

Huntingdon First would give a strong collective voice to our town. It would ensure that plans relating to the area were shared and that the views of the business community were heard. Working collaboratively, businesses would be much more powerful and have the ability to influence issues which are important.

With a shared ambition, we believe bringing together the energy and experience of businesses and drawing up a clear strategy for our future is essential to our continued success.

## HUNTINGDON FIRST WILL...

1

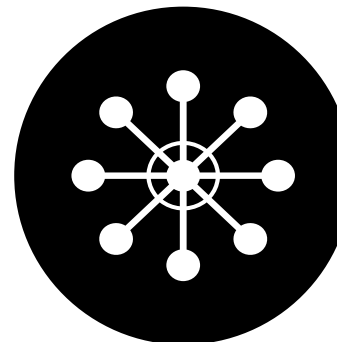
**Deliver a strong collective voice to campaign on behalf of businesses on issues that matter.**

2

**Provide advocacy to shape change where required to meet the future needs of Huntingdon's economy. We will work with partners and businesses to lobby local authorities and public sector organisations to robustly represent the views of businesses in the BID area.**

3

**Leverage additional investment and resource to ensure that Huntingdon First delivers added value.**



### Training

Huntingdon First has always supported business with free or subsidised business training courses, in addition to the regular first-aid course we have recently introduced the Personal Licence Training to support our retail, hospitality and beauty businesses. Enhancing this offer is a key objective for us over the next five years, honing training courses to meet specific needs within our business community in the ever changing landscape of the high street and business in general. Introducing vacancy boards around town, supporting business to recruit and promote work within Huntingdon.

### Entrepreneur Initiative

We are keen to support growth in Huntingdon and will be introducing the 'Entrepreneur Initiative' with the aim to support new business within the town, growing seed ideas into fully fledged business or shop fronts. Our aim is to offer start up training, guidance and a buddy system within our business community. A High Street based 'Growth Hub' shop for start-ups to begin trading within an indoor market space to allow organic business growth. Working collaboratively with HDC Economic Development on existing initiatives that have proven traction and success rates.

### Business Support

Business support will continue with our weekly Springboard Footfall Counter reporting, allowing businesses to benchmark KPI's on a local and national level. Business emails to promote and support our business community through a collective voice, championing and raising awareness of your needs to source additional funding and expertise from external bodies, adding value to your own contributions.

### Advertising

Continued advertising and marketing for all of our businesses, ensuring that our community has visibility on the wide range of goods and services on offer on the High Street. Using our 'Discover Huntingdon' branding to entice, excite and encourage our visitors to explore Huntingdon like never before!



# IMPROVING SUSTAINABILITY & THE ENVIRONMENT

Increasingly businesses are recognising their role and responsibility both in protecting and enhancing the environment in which they operate. The climate emergency is now higher on the agenda than ever before. The BID will collaborate with businesses to help them to operate more sustainably. Working closely with the many successful and pioneering schemes already in operation in Cambridgeshire, the BID will seek campaigns that support its ambitions on issues such as climate change, economic vitality and employment.

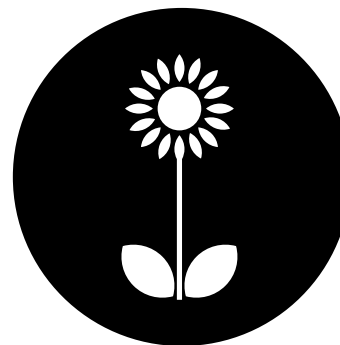
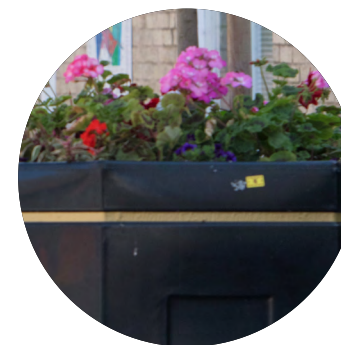
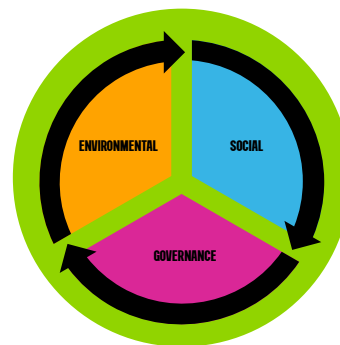
ESG (environmental, social and governance) criteria are of increasing interest to companies, their investors and other stakeholders. With growing concern about the ethical status of companies, these standards are becoming the central factors that measure the ethical impact and sustainability of investment in a business.

HUNTINGDON | PEOPLE | PLACES | PURPOSE

## HUNTINGDON FIRST WILL

Bring together the many different activities of individual businesses in Huntingdon into a framework aimed towards enhancing the future sustainability of the area.

- Potential to reduce business costs through collective buying
- Vibrant communities
- Safe and secure
- Increased recycling
- Improving air quality
- Reducing carbon emissions
- Less traffic
- Business resilience
- Seek to assist members achieve ESG targets through its collaborative work in the Town Centre.
- Deliver a richer outdoor environment.
- Work to introduce and encourage sustainable travel initiatives.
- Work to reduce the environmental impact of the town.



### Outside Spaces

Huntingdon First will focus on creating a nicer outdoor environment for people to enjoy while helping businesses to reduce their environmental impact.

### Sustainable Travel

Introduce sustainable travel initiatives to encourage people to consider alternatives to the car; these could include bike storage, bike hire scheme and a Huntingdon First funded bike doctor. These initiatives will help to improve air quality and the overall landscape of the town.

### Trade Waste

Introduce waste consolidation and delivery consolidation schemes, saving businesses money as well as saving the planet, supporting businesses to promote initiatives that encourage more recycling in the public realm.

Ensure that all Huntingdon First initiatives consider additional improvements to the environment, are conscious of the environment when booking and promoting events.





# FINANCE

## Section 8

The levy that provides Huntingdon First funding is governed by a set of BID rules.

Essentially, when the BID is approved at ballot all eligible businesses will pay a % of their rateable value (in Section 9) to fund the action plan set out in this Business Plan. The BID will be in place for five years and all retail, leisure, food and beverage and office businesses at or above the £5,000 threshold of rateable value level will be liable for contributing to the BID.



### The BID Rules

- The BID term will be a period of five years from October 1st 2022 until September 30th 2027;
- The BID levy will be applied to rated properties in the BID district with a rateable value of £5,000 or more;
- The BID levy will be a fixed rate of 1.5% rateable value as at 1 October 2022 using the 2017 list for all eligible rate payers, rising to 1.6% in April 2024 and 1.7% in April 2025;
- Properties that come into the rating list during the BID term will be subject to the levy from the effective date that the property is brought into the rating list and the rateable value effective at that time;
- Where the rateable value for an individual hereditament changes and results in a lower levy, then this comes into effect only from the start of the financial year in which the change is made and no refunds will be made for previous years. This is known as the closed year rule;
- The levy will assume an annual growth rate for inflation of 3% to be applied on April 1 each year;
- There will be no VAT charged on the BID levy;
- There is no distinction to be made between occupied or unoccupied hereditaments;
- The BID levy will not be affected by the small business rate relief scheme;
- The BID levy will not be increased other than as specified in the levy rules;
- The BID levy rules and BID area cannot be altered without an alteration ballot.



# BUDGET

## Section 9

|                              | Year 1  | Year 2  | Year 3    | Year 4      | Year 5      | Total        |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Income                       |         |         |           |             |             |              |
| BID levy                     | 160,000 | 164,800 | 175,924   | 181,201.20  | 186,430     | 868,355.72   |
| Voluntary contributions      | 500     | 500     | 600       | 500         | 700         | 2,800        |
| Grants & Speculative Funding | 20,000  | 20,000  | 20,000    | 20,000      | 20,000      | 20,000       |
| Commercial Income            | 10,000  | 10,000  | 10,000    | 10,000      | 10,000      | 50,000       |
| Public Funding               | 0       | 0       | 0         | 0           | 0           | 0            |
| Total Income                 | 190,500 | 195,300 | 206,524   | 211,701.72  | 217,130     | 1,021,155.72 |
| Expenditure                  |         |         |           |             |             |              |
| Enhance Huntingdon           | 50,000  | 51,500  | 53,045    | 54,636.35   | 56,275.441  | 265,456.791  |
| Promote Huntingdon           | 40,000  | 41,200  | 42,436    | 43,709.08   | 45,020.352  | 212,365.432  |
| Support Huntingdon           | 12,500  | 12,875  | 13,261.25 | 13,659.088  | 14,068.86   | 66,364.198   |
| Sustain Huntingdon           | 12,500  | 12,875  | 13,261.25 | 13,659.08   | 14,068.86   | 66,364.198   |
| Management & Administration  | 30,000  | 30,900  | 31,827    | 32,781.81   | 33,765.264  | 159,274.074  |
| Contingency                  | 16,000  | 16,480  | 16,974.4  | 17,483.632  | 18,008.141  | 84,946.173   |
| Total Expenditure            | 161,000 | 165,830 | 170,804.9 | 175,929.047 | 181,206.918 | 854,770.865  |
| Annual surplus               | 29,500  | 29,470  | 35,719.1  | 35,772.673  | 35,923.082  | 0            |
| Cumulative reserves          |         | 58,970  | 94,689.1  | 130,461.773 | 166,384.855 | 166,384.855  |

### Notes to Budget

Budget figures are indicative based on the anticipated levy income using 2017 rateable values. Assumed 3% annual inflationary increase and 100% levy collection rate. Levy income may fluctuate in relation to occupancy and is subject to the market at the time of the ratings assessment.

Allocations reflect current priorities; these may change causing variances and re-allocations across the five-year term. Any material variations of the budget will be approved by the Board. Contingency based upon 10% of BID levy.

Our management and overhead will be maintained where possible beneath the industry benchmark of 20%. We seek to leverage voluntary income, which will help enable more of our members’ contributions to be allocated to work programmes, which directly benefit business and the local area in general.

Through an Operating Agreement with the Council, a process will be put in place to monitor the collection of the BID levy over the duration of the five-year tenure.

Within one month of the ballot result, Huntingdon First and the Council will set up a Monitoring Group. There will be at least two meetings of the group each financial year throughout the BID term. At each meeting the monitoring group will:

- Review the effectiveness of collection and enforcement of the BID levy
- Assess the information provided by Huntingdon First and the Council to each party and make recommendations and/or adjustments.

### Leveraging additional Non-BID Levy Funding

Huntingdon First will seek to grow its number of voluntary members and in particular leverage its activity towards the delivery of additional funding to support ongoing work programmes. This is with particular regard to public funding opportunities, property owners and commercial/ corporate partners.







# GOVERNANCE

## Section 10

Business Improvement Districts can provide effective organisational models which bring together the business community, both occupiers and owners, and public authorities, to work together for the benefit of defined locations.

### Huntingdon First will have two categories of membership:

- **BID levy payers** - commercial occupiers liable to pay Huntingdon First BID levy
- **Voluntary members** – companies and organisations that are not BID levy-payers, but approved by the BID Company Board

The nomination of voluntary members will be supported by either a financial contribution of a fixed annual sum (cash or in-kind) or their strategic importance to the delivery of Huntingdon First's business objectives. Key groups might include smaller businesses that choose to join Huntingdon First on a voluntary basis and property owners.

Huntingdon First would be established as a not-for-profit, limited by Guarantee Company, overseen by a BID Manager and governed by a Board of Directors, to achieve the things that businesses have asked for and have been identified within the business plan.

### Organisation Structure

The Board of Directors, which is chosen from the businesses that form the constituency of the organisation, will lead and guide the work of Huntingdon First. The Board will have the appropriate balance of skills, experience, independence and knowledge to enable them to discharge their respective duties and responsibilities effectively. It will also seek diversity and ensure a representative mix of its membership.

The Huntingdon First BID Board will meet monthly and drive the set aims and objectives of the Company, as well as maintaining good governance, overseeing the budget and monitoring performance. The Board will consist of between 12-16 non-Executive Directors including the Chair. Directors will be appointed by the Board subject to ratification by the BID members at annual meetings of the company and should include representation from all three local councils.

\*Further details available in the Company Articles of Association

Observers can be appointed by the Board subject to ratification by Huntingdon First members at annual meetings of the company.

Huntingdon First seeks to embrace the businesses and wider community with a programme of work that meets its stated aims and objectives. To help guide Huntingdon First in this pursuit, Board sub-groups might be set up to encourage participation and add value to the decision-making of Huntingdon First.

### BID Huntingdon Manager

The delivery of Huntingdon Firsts business plan will be led by the BID Manager and team, accountable to the Chairman and Board. The role will work with the Board and sub-group members, partners and specialist service providers to ensure the effective implementation of the agreed annual action plan.

### The Council

A key relationship will exist between Huntingdon First and the Council. The Council is the main determining authority in respect of the streets and properties included in the Business Improvement District. Two important legal agreements will exist between Huntingdon First and the Council:

- An **Operating Agreement** which outlines how the BID levy monies are collected, administered and passed over to Huntingdon First.
- A **Baseline Agreement** which specifies the level of Council-led service provision in the area, ensuring that any services that Huntingdon First provides are additional.

\* To view the Operating Agreement and Baseline Agreement go to [www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk/bid-huntingdon/document-library.html](http://www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk/bid-huntingdon/document-library.html)

### Voluntary members

Businesses of all sizes will be important to Huntingdon First. Huntingdon First will maintain a voluntary membership scheme for businesses falling beneath the BID levy threshold or outside of the BID's geographical area. This will give smaller businesses the opportunity to engage with, and benefit from Huntingdon First, while not being compelled to contribute a mandatory levy. By enabling businesses with a rateable value of less than £5,000 to provide a voluntary levy, we will be able to enhance the level of the annual budget.

### Property Owners

Property owners in the area will be encouraged to join Huntingdon First on a voluntary basis and help inform the more long-term objectives of the organisation. As set out in the membership criteria, membership will be on the basis of a financial contribution towards the overall management of the BID or towards specific projects Huntingdon First seeks to advance.





# HOW TO VOTE

## Section 11

From August 18th 2022, you will be given the opportunity to vote on this business proposal for the renewal of Huntingdon First.

To ensure neutrality, the BID ballot will be administered by the Council's Returning Officer and electoral services staff and agents. It will be arranged in line with the rules set out in the BID regulations (2004) as approved by Parliament.



### A ballot can only be deemed successful if:

- The majority in number of those voting vote in favour of the BID
- The majority in proportion of rateable value of those voting are in favour of the BID

The BID levy is then applicable to all eligible rate-payers within the proposed BID Huntingdon area.

### Voting procedures

- Your ballot paper will be distributed on **Thursday August 18th 2022**
- You will need to cast and return your postal vote by **5pm on Thursday 15th September 2022**
- The results of the vote will be announced online on **Friday 16th September 2022**



All eligible businesses will be entitled to one vote per hereditament. Businesses with more than one hereditament will be given the equivalent number of votes.

A full list of businesses eligible to vote is available at [www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk/bid-huntingdon/document-library.html](http://www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk/bid-huntingdon/document-library.html)

To discuss this document in more detail please contact the BID Town Centre Manager:

► **Paul Sweeney**

✉ [paul@bidhuntingdon.co.uk](mailto:paul@bidhuntingdon.co.uk)

☎ **01480 450250**

Full ballot arrangements are available at [www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk/bid-huntingdon/document-library.html](http://www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk/bid-huntingdon/document-library.html)

BID Huntingdon is your opportunity to have an influential voice and implement changes that will positively affect your business and help ensure the future wellbeing of Huntingdon Town Centre.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

